

THE
DUTIES OF MAN,
A
SERMON,

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF
THE PUBLIC FAST,
APRIL 19, 1793.

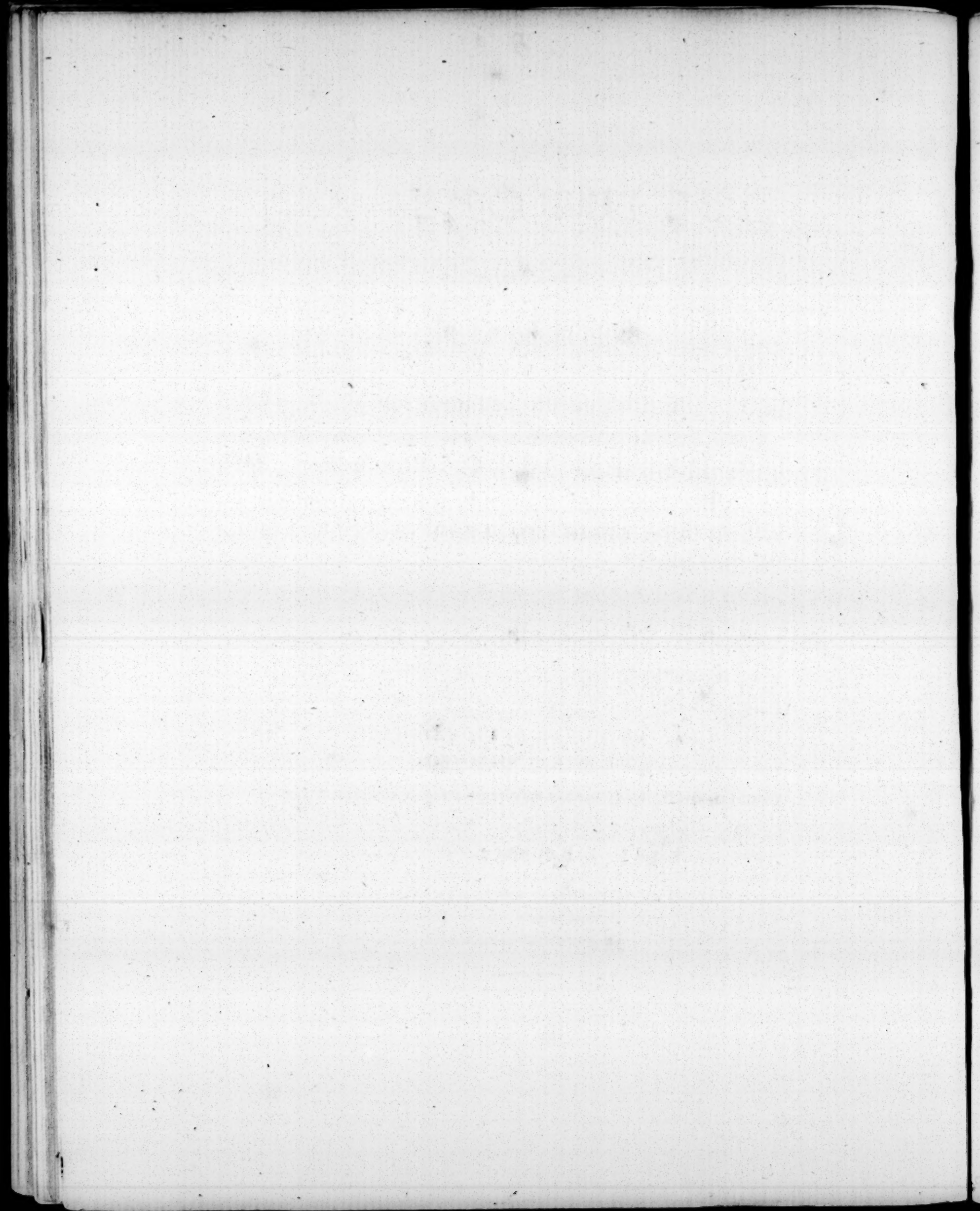
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PREFACE.

THIS Discourse was printed chiefly for the purpose of being distributed amongst my Parishioners; and it is published in the humble hope of contributing somewhat towards making the Principles contained in it more extensively known, or rather more generally regarded, than in the restless Disposition of the present Times seems to be the case.

Riches, Luxury, Ostentation, and an evil Spirit of wanton disquisition, have nearly put all serious Reflection and sober Conduct out of countenance; and thrown so thick a veil over the Eyes of Many, that the Vengeance apparently threatened by an outraged God upon the heinous crimes and impious provocations of a late flourishing and potent Kingdom appear to have little or no effect in removing it.

How

How then, it may be asked, shall the gentle Voice of Reason or Religion be heard among the waves of a tumultuous World?

Cast thy Bread upon the waters, says the Wise King, and Thou shalt find it after many days. In the Morning sow thy seed, and in the Evening withhold not thy hand; for Thou canst not tell which shall prosper, this or that.

There seemed likewise, amidst the several excellent Publications in allay of the Ferment occasioned by the new Doctrines in Politics, some room for the introduction of the Argument principally insisted upon in the following Pages.

THE

THE DUTIES OF MAN,
A SERMON,
&c. &c.

1 THESS.—IV.—11.

AND THAT YE STUDY TO BE QUIET, AND TO DO
YOUR OWN BUSINESS.

THERE can be none in this Congregation, who are not thoroughly convinced of the existence of a God; who are not moreover well acquainted with the nature of his several Attributes of Immenfity, of Power, of Omniprefence, of Wifdom, and of Goodnefs.

If then there be a God, the Maker of the heavens and the earth, and all that them inherit; if He, who made, continues to uphold, prefervè, invigorate, direct every the fmalleft movement in the vaft machine of Universe; if He gave to every thing living its peculiar properties and propenfities with

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an evident intention that the due cultivation and gratification of them should directly lead to the acquisition of the chief happiness of each several Agent ; if the same God has endowed Mankind with reason and gratitude ; he certainly endowed them with reason to constitute them Kings, he endowed them with gratitude to constitute them Priests of this terrestrial Globe ; he assuredly invested them with these high dignities and attributes, that men of all kinds and denominations, of all ranks and conditions (being all partakers of one common nature, and all equally responsible for their behaviour) should be under an indispensable obligation of knowing God as he is ; of knowing, that it is He, who hath made us, and not We ourselves ; that We are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

For it is the capacity of understanding this circumstance, that draws the great and striking line of difference between us, and other creatures, which have pretensions to some degree of the reasoning faculty. It is this privilege, that in a more especial manner distinguishes us from the wily ape, the half reasoning elephant, and the sagacious dog. It is the observance of the duties arising from this superior capacity, that in reality constitutes us Kings and Priests of the terrestrial creation.

And

And therefore so far as we are ignorant of or depart from the obligations resulting from those relations, so far we are ignorant of or depart from the very condition and law of our Existence.

From the same principles it manifestly follows, that as Men, as Children of one common parent, as Individuals of a highly favoured species, connected together under various forms of association by the general bonds of society, we ought to live under the influence of those principles, to cultivate those affections, which were given us by the Author of all Good to make our nature lovely ; and are the established means of securing happiness to ourselves, and to our fellow creatures.

As Englishmen, or Members of a particular Community, we ought to live in dutiful, manly and uniform subjection to those Laws of social union and protection, which under the direction of an overruling Providence have been ordained by the wisdom of our Forefathers, and sanctioned by the experience of their general Utility : We ought to pay the respect due to superior stations without servility, without hypocrisy ; as a debt due to the present constitution of human nature, and therefore to God, the Author of that nature.

Submission to those Laws, and Obedience to the Civil Magistrate, form so important a part of the Second Table, or the duty we owe to our neighbour; and the nature and extent of them follow so immediately and easily from the conclusions already established, that it would not at *any* time have been necessary to make any apology for enlarging upon them from this place; much less therefore at present, when principles are adopted in regard to social obligation totally unfounded in themselves, or rather founded in downright and unqualified Atheism; of consequence in their propagation would be productive of all the mischiefs of Anarchy, and in their establishment productive of every the worst evil, which can possibly afflict mankind, or reduce it to the very lowest state of degeneracy and brutality.

For, under the dominion of Atheism and the sole controul of the Leviathan,* what shall prevent the confusion of kinds (spoken of by the Apostle), the murders and adulteries of the night, the secret contrivances of the closet, and all those dreadful evils, which may be committed in spite of the most active vigilance of the most active magistrates in the execution of mere human laws?

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* Leviathan] a term introduced by Mr. Hobbs; and here signifying any popular government established or conducted without regard to the Will and Sanctions of the Deity.

In short, have we not before our eyes in a neighbouring nation, a wonderful and striking proof, that the expectation of such effects from such causes is by no means exaggerated?

Do we not see of late in all their publick acts, their proclamations, and exultations, the very mention of God sedulously left out, and all appeals to his Providence utterly discarded?

Do we not observe their Convention not only not shewing any Signs of detestation or disgust, not even attending in silent astonishment, but (hear it, O Heaven, and give Ear, O Earth!) giving marks of approbation and applause, whilst their nefarious Orators are traducing the Holy Names of God and his Son.

Do we not see in their divorces, their massacres, their devastations, their demolitions, the terrible but certain fruits of such Principles?

How is it then, that, with the humanity, good sense, seriousness, and probity natural to Englishmen, many among us seem disposed to deluge this Country in such dreadful scenes and abominable doctrines?

How is it, that they suffer *their* calmer reason and better judgement to be led astray by Gallic vanity, and philosophical fanaticism?

How

How is it, that they do not understand, or rather will not recollect, that civil Obligation stands precisely upon the same ground as Morality and Religion, viz. *the Will of God himself?*

For, either we owe our Origin in the first instance to an Eternal, Almighty, and Intelligent Being; Or, we are the Offspring of unintelligent and unintelligible Eternity; Or, of Chance, which in no instance within our memory or the memory of human records ever gave the most distant *analogical*, much less *real*, proof of its being the probable or even possible cause of such a creation.

In the Two latter Cases, the Laws of Society could have no better sanctions than those of compulsion, custom, or compact. Under such Legislators as Eternity, Chance, and the Leviathan, it would be utterly *in vain* to talk of civil, moral, or religious obligation. Every thing would be just, every thing proper, every thing satisfactory, that could be done with impunity: Conscience as well as God would be banished out of the world; for what has Conscience to do with, what has Conscience to dread from Eternity or Chance?

But, if it be certainly true, that there is a Conscience in all men, and that it cannot in any the most abandoned or in any the most profligate instance be
entirely

entirely stifled; If it be true, that there is an Almighty God, an Allintelligent Legislator, the Author of Universe, and of consequence among other things the Creator of Conscience; Then is it equally true, that *He* must be the Ordainer of those laws, *by* which Conscience feels itself bound, and *to* which it feels itself in all cases amenable. Then we shall find, that to be honest in our dealings, to do no violence, in short to do good and to eschew evil, are laws not only founded in the promotion of human happiness, but by the very circumstance of their beneficent tendency *apparently* directed, and their observance *unequivocally* enjoined by the Author and Contriver of All Good.

If we are the Offspring of a Deity, of a Creator, who in and by his Omnipresence presides over and directs the works of his hands, then we must consider the Laws of Society as a part of those Works, ordained by his will and sanctioned by his authority; Then we shall see clearly the reasons, why they are so extremely similar in their grounds, objects, subjects, attachments, obligations, to those subsisting between a Parent and a Child; Then the love of country, the love of native soil and native customs, will appear in their true light. For it appears from the recorded formation of man, the succession of human

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generations, and from universal experience, that Man was born to be a social as well as a religious Being ; That out of Society he could neither obtain existence, nor the accommodations necessary to his continuance in it ; That Society never existed in the world without some government or other ; And that Obedience is the instinctive, natural, as well as most legitimate bulwark of Government : Therefore it follows, that Obedience to the existing Government is the Law of Human Nature collectively and individually considered ; And is an Act of Religion, that is, An Act of obedience to God, the Author of that nature.

It is in fact a Law, to which all human beings readily conform themselves ; And from which they never revolt, till sophisticated causes, or accidental circumstances interrupt their propensities.

And it is, as might be expected, universal in its operation : and its obligations as well understood by the peasant as the statesman : A Precept it is obvious to the apprehension and easy in the observance : A Duty it is attended with present peace and future happiness.

Between the Extremes of petulant opposition and passive obedience there are such an infinite variety of situations, that it is absolutely impossible to define or
limit

limit the point, where obedience may justly end and resistance justly begin : But it may with confidence be asserted, that there are no Governments, where the wanton insults or wicked machinations of the People will not of necessity lead to fresh and unpleasant restraints upon their accustomed liberties.

Our holy and celestial Scriptures, as in every thing else, so in this, prescribe, as might well be expected from a divine revelation, Rules of conduct the most excellent ; and the most strictly conformable to good sense, sound philosophy, and universal experience.

There, amongst many other texts that might be adduced, it is asserted, that the Powers that be are ordained of God : Therefore be subject to the higher Powers. Give tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; honor to whom honor. And to the observance of these duties our blessed Saviour himself was on all occasions so anxiously attentive, that even more than once He put himself to the expence of a miracle to comply with them ; as in the instance of his paying tribute out of the mouth of the fish, in a case thought unjust, or at least extremely questionable, by Peter and the other disciples. With what punctuality did he execute the rites, and attend upon the ordinances of the Mosaic law ? With what composure and complacency did he resign himself to

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the officers of justice, and the administrators of the expiring, but yet existing laws of his country? Shewing in all his actions a just exemplification of his precepts.

Indeed, what particular Mode of Government will most conduce to human happiness is neither in the old or new Scriptures any where decreed: The adoption is left by both to the power of habits and local circumstances. And so it in reason ought: For by that means, generally speaking, the Genius of the Government will be suited to the genius, the wants, the situation of the People; as growing out of them, and incorporated with them.

And for this very reason it is, that the People should be extremely careful how they meddle, much more how they join themselves with those who are given to change. For in the most moderate attempts at reform, it should be considered, that such things as bear the appearance of, and are most declaimed against as abuses, have probably in the first instance obtained their use, and continue to retain their practice from an utility not discernible but by their abolition.

God willeth, that all men as religious beings should be happy in the world to come; as social beings, that they should likewise be happy in this, and to that end live under governments likely to contribute thereto.

thereto. Now it seems to be agreed on all hands, that the two Grand Objects of civil society are Liberty of person and Security of property ; where therefore any People are in a good degree possess'd of these, it will behove them, as a duty they owe to God, their Neighbour, and Themselves ; as a duty they owe to the happiness of the present and succeeding Generations, to hearken with infinite caution to the insinuations of wicked, turbulent, or designing men, when they are seeking about whom they may devour, by drawing them into the snares of their foolish devices and evil counsels.

When Men of profligate characters, abandoned principles, and desperate fortunes, are loud and clamorous in the pursuit of Public Good, it can scarcely admit of a doubt but they have Public Mischief in view, and the Hope of glutting their rapacious and insatiable lusts with rapine or bloodshed.

To ascertain what degrees of this liberty of person and security of property men *may want* or suffer themselves to be *deprived of*, and yet be *perfectly happy*, would require almost as many several discussions as there are different governments and different nations in the world. Associated Tribes must consider this matter each for themselves. And it would be just as absurd for One Nation to impose its notions

of civil happiness and subordination upon Another, as to insist upon seeing the fruits of the Torrid Zone planted and cultivated amidst the rocks and snows of Siberia.

It cannot however be denied, or even dissembled, that under some Governments men do not seem to enjoy that degree either of liberty or property necessary to their happiness as subjects, or their improvement as men.

Yet to a By-stander doubtless their afflictions appear more deplorable, and their enjoyments less both in quality and degree, than is in reality the case; Human Nature is extremely versatile, it is wonderfully ingenious in extracting the utmost good from given circumstances: in lamenting therefore the misfortunes of distant and unknown people, in pitying their condition, in lending an humane and gentle hand towards mitigating their sufferings, and delivering them from the yoke of bondage, we cannot be allowed to go those lengths, which have justly brought down upon our neighbouring Nation the reproaches and resentments of the whole European World.

In the mean time, amidst this wreck of principle and widely extended storm of political sentiment, it should at least be *our* great consolation, it should be

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our particular cause of rejoicing, that by the especial favor of Providence *we* live under a Constitution in all its parts so happily adjusted, that ample provision is made for the admission of all those differences of rank, which will of necessity take place in human affairs; and at the same time for preventing those differences from becoming tyrannous, hateful, or exclusive.

We have therefore most sincerely to beg of God to continue us in the possession of a Constitution, which in its principles at least seems to be at the summit of political perfection. And with regard to any little imperfections, which the hand of mischief may point out in it, let it be remembered, that the most perfect constitutions, constitutions formed by angels, nay formed by the immediate hand of God himself, would not under the management of human beings remain long in that state of perfection. The folly, the misery of it is, that in political institutions and administrations, the most imperfect perhaps of intellectual beings expect perfection.

But let Us be wise enough to refrain from this folly, and not be persuaded to barter our sterling liberty, security, and prosperity, for the poor chance of advantages distant, possible, and untried; with the certainty of encountering real dangers and dreadful calamities: Let us not quit the reality for something
perhaps

perhaps worse than the shadow : Let us be content with our glorious Constitution, as it was in its great and leading Characteristics, digested, settled, and ordered by the wisest heads and soundest hearts that this nation ever boasted of ; at a time too when Learning was not frippery, nor Patriotism pretence.

Let us be content with a Government, or the Executive Part of that constitution, where the hard hand of capricious Power neither is, nor can be, felt with impunity ; where every one reaps the fruits of his own labour, when, and in whatsoever place he pleases ; where every one sits safe under the shadow of his own fig-tree ; where the highest posts of honor, dignity, and consequence, are attainable by *any* Individual, who has sufficient opportunity to make his abilities serviceable and conspicuous enough to deserve such distinction : Where the well compacted Fabric of social Union is looked up to with emulation by an admiring world ; where no Rights are surrendered, but such as in the use would be detrimental to others, and in consequence ultimately so to the Exerciser ; where improvements are adopted, and grievances corrected by the skilful and lenient hand of Experience.

In such circumstances, refractoriness, contumacy, murmurs, disobedience, petulance, what are they
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but the issue of a restless and perturbed Spirit, of a Mind unprincipled, untutored; unacquainted with the condition of its own nature, and the blessings it enjoys under no other human controul than restraints in themselves absolutely necessary; imposed and enforced by fixed, mild, and equal laws.

Great and grievous Abuses may call for great Changes; But when things are already Well, when the Mountains rejoice and the Valleys smile, when Plenty pours from her horn unexampled abundance, when None have reason to repine but the Unconnected with the effects of Commerce, what wise or good man, what conscientious Christian, would engage in the horrors and havoc of political convulsion, to obtain uncertain and imaginary improvements, or extremely* questionable alterations?

In all large societies some must rule, and some must obey; some must be high, and some must be low; some must be governors, and some must be governed. A State of Nature in its usual acceptation, however logical it may be to have recourse to such a supposition for the better ascertainment of civil and political disquisitions, never did, nor ever could, exist: Therefore all inferences drawn from such a supposition should have the real, as well as supposititious state of the case constantly in view.

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* See the Appendix.

But allowing for a moment that it could exist, there would be found in it No rights of person, None of property. Women, Children, the Infirm, the Weak, the Old, must of necessity be the Slaves of, or dependent upon, the Strong and Robust; and even the Strong, like beasts of prey, would hold their violent and comfortless rights upon no better tenure than the wretched and precarious chance of not meeting with Human Savages stronger than themselves.

It is in organized society alone, if any where, that men are born with equal rights to unequal things. But, even there, they must quietly submit to the condition of their nature, and patiently acknowledge, that by the design of their Creator they can be entitled to no greater privileges or advantages than their abilities, natural or acquired, warrant them to expect.

As therefore Organized Society is of the very essence of human happiness, nay even of human existence, so Distinctions and Ranks in society must to the end of time be as various and as different as is the variety and difference of the mental or corporeal powers of men; as is the variety and difference of their various constitutions, tempers, inclinations, application, pursuits, prejudices, and education.

There

There can be None so absurd, None so ignorant, as seriously to imagine that sloth, extravagance, stupidity, or excess, ought to live upon the fruits of industry, ingenuity, sobriety, and temperance; or that weakness and honesty should be trampled upon by violence and craft.

Now from universal and unquestionable experience it is manifest, that industry, œconomy, ingenuity, and the protection of Society, are the original causes of riches, splendor and influence; and therefore of all those distinctions and ranks, which take place among mankind. But, notwithstanding these apparent distinctions, it is wisely ordered by an all gracious and all directing Providence, that the happiness attached to these respective Situations is absolutely upon a level. God never did, never could design, that the honest, the industrious, the œconomical in the lower ranks of life should be in reality less happy than the opulent and noble.

With the Idle, the Vicious, the Thoughtless and the Prodigal this Argument has nothing to do; They are in all degrees and in all situations miserable: therefore to their own misery let us leave them, in order to observe in Conclusion, that the True Happiness of man was not intended to spring from the mere gratification of the sensual appetites, nor from

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the abundance of riches and honors : For, being a rational and immortal Being, hoping by death to shake off his incumbrances, and to have his earthly clothing purified and refined, He must look for happiness, even here, suited to his nature ; must endeavour to have his will in due subjection to his reason, must do his duty in the Station assigned him by Providence, and be content with food convenient for him. In effecting these duties, those in humbler Stations have greatly the advantage over those in high ; their temptations are fewer, their passions less violent, their appetites less palled. All must eat to the satisfying appetite, the Rich can do no more. The Lower Ranks enjoy in common with the Exalted all the endearments of domestic charities, and send out their children into the world with much greater ease and much better prospects of relative success. The Generality must earn their bread by the sweat of their brow ; it is the Condition imposed by God upon the Sons of Adam : And happy are they, who labour under the necessity : It is the cause of activity and diversity, of freedom from despondency, anxiety and want ; it is the cause of health, cheerfulness, and vigor. How great, how afflicting the Evils are, which the Want of this necessity creates, the Opulent know but too intimately,
I had

I had almost said too severely. If Taxes be heavy and Provisions dear, the advance of wages to the Labourer, the Mechanic, and Manufacturer are now in full proportion to those pretended and misrepresented grievances, to all those topics of exaggerated reproach and declamation in the mouths of the drunkard and the sluggard. A generous and considerate Nation can make ample, can make noble provision, for the support of the Sick and Needy in their distress; but it looks with indignation on the claims of Those, who expect to earn in three days enough to support them in idleness, extravagance, and debauchery through the other four: It sees Such Patriots aiming at rapine, not at reform; at confusion, not at legitimate government, under any form, or under any order.

But had mankind always continued as equal in outward circumstances and fortune as they are by birth, how could it have been determined who should rule and who should obey? would it not have been matter of eternal contest? Happily, as it is, the poor (wholly taken up with and engaged in the support of themselves and families; and conscious of their accidental inabilities for such purposes) without a grudge, most willingly resign the administration of their common concerns into the hands of Those, whose ample provision for the wants of

the body leaves them at full liberty to improve their faculties and knowledge; and, in consequence, to cultivate and promote the general interests of Society and Religion.

And Who in times of publick exigence, in times of partial scarcity and distress, could administer adequate relief to the sufferings of their fellow creatures, or in anywise prevent the disastrous consequences of national calamities? Not Those, who earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

Or Who could give their time and attention to works of public utility, to the institution of beneficent charities for the relief of indigence and misery? Not Those, who rise up early and late take rest to provide the bread of carefulness: But whose Hands the Lord hath already prospered; whose Garners he hath already filled with Corn; whose Oxen are strong to labour; who count their Thousands and their Ten thousands in the streets.

The Time would fail me to enumerate all the blessings, which the lower Orders of this kingdom possess and the numerous* causes they have to be quiet and mind their own business. It would likewise fail me
should

*These Causes are enumerated in a very ample and satisfactory manner by ARCHDEACON PALEY in his REASONS FOR CONTENTMENT.

Should I attempt to display the judicious† Arrangement of the three constituted Powers of the State : Or the Stability, Moderation, and Utility thence resulting. Happy, abundantly happy are We above all people on the Earth, could we but bring ourselves to think soberly and properly upon the subject. But we seem surfeited with happiness; and ready, like children, to throw the Gifts bestowed upon us by the bountiful hand of Providence in the very face of the Giver !

† A striking and interesting Epitome of this Arrangement will be found in Bishop Horsley's Sermon, on January 30th, 1793. p. 18—21

END OF THE SERMON.

AN
APPENDIX,
ADDRESSED TO THE CONSIDERATION OF
Modern State-Reformers.

A GREAT clamour has for some time past been raised on the subject of a Reform in the Representation of the Commons of this Country, whether for the Purpose of really effecting a just reform in that Instance, or for the total subversion of the Constitution, will perhaps admit of a question.

But if the Promoters of it be as serious, as honest, as moderate, as they would persuade us to be the case, the few following Observations may be worth their attention.

Representation, in the usual acceptation of the word, of numbers beyond moderate limits, is a thing impossible. The Seven or Eight Hundred Souls composing the National Convention of France no more represent the Twenty-five Millions of that Country, than they do Those of the Whole Earth. And notwithstanding all the talk, and all the parade, and all the pretence to the contrary, the Members of it in general have obtained their Seats by the corrupt influence, by the direful operations of violence and fear; insomuch, that perhaps it is not going too far to say, that not more than a Twentieth Part of the Whole Community had, or dared to have, any effective or conscientious share in their election.

But

But though Representation in this sense is a mere Chimera, held out occasionally to affright the Administration of this Kingdom by leading the People into error; yet it is of the utmost consequence to the Liberties of this Country, that there should be a Competent Number of Men selected periodically from the general Mass for the purposes of Advice, of Information, of Correction, of Superintendence, and Legislation.

Whether this Selection is effected in the best method possible, I will not take upon me to affirm; but this I will venture to say, that I never yet saw a Scheme of Alteration proposed, that did not, in my apprehension, throw too preponderating a Weight either into the scale of aristocratical influence, or democratical corruption.

The opposite Facts and Circumstances, still fresh in memory, attending the overthrow of Lord North's Administration, and the establishment of the present Minister, demonstrate, that the Energies of the House of Commons, with all its imputed imperfections upon its head, are equal to the Exigencies of Occasion, and the *well* founded Expectations of the People.

The sober and considerate Part of the Community do not wish, indeed would be very much alarmed, to see that House liable to be tossed to and fro by every gust of passion, which occasionally seizes the minds of the Interested or Uninformed. It expects from it the firmness and deliberation of good sense, as well as constitutional integrity.

Experience then shewing, that the Condition of that House is sufficient for the purposes of General Good, and the preservation of General Liberty (the grand, the sole Objects of its existence) should not especial care be taken, how any Amendments in it are attempted at all; and, particularly, that Such amendments should not fall into the rude hands of the unthinking Multitude or vain Empyrics?

THE END.

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